nature net

The NatureKenya Newsletter * www.naturekenya.org * May 06

update

Sagana Fish Farms

Fri 12 May '06

Bring a packed lunch and meet at the Nairobi Museum car park at 8:00 a.m. Book at Nature Kenya with 100/- (Organised by Samaki Working Group)

Walking at Kigio Wildlife Conservancy

Sat 13 May '06

At this expansive area near Naivasha, walking is recommended and the guides will assist you identify animal tracks and some of the 150 different birds recorded at Kigio. Meet at the Nairobi Museum car park at 7:30 a.m. Bring with yau a picnic lunch and drinking water. Book at Nature Kenya with 500/- per persan. Transpart is by car poal.

Gardening and Compost making

A one-day course for gardeners by Friends of Nairobi Arboretum (FONA)

26 May '06, 9:00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

at the Nairobi Arboretum

700/- per person

Registration Deadline: 24th May

Come and learn about practical garden maintenance and how to convert litter into compost manure!

The cost covers writing material, lunch and a certificate of participation. *If available, please carry a jembe and secateurs.*

Register at the FONA affice at the Nairobi Arbaretum. Far mare infarmatian, contact Purity or Doris, tel: 2725471/93 or E-mail <fona@naturekenya.org>

NB: There will be an optional Tree Walk from 8:30 a.m.

The Naked Truth

Rosie and the Mole Rats

Tues 13 June '06

at 5:30 p.m.

at the Louis Leakey Hall, National Museums, Nairobi

The first documentary about this mysterious mammal. It is the size of a mause, lives in calanies with a queen and breaks all the rules of nature. In Meru Natianal Park a German field researcher follows the tracks of this zoological riddle in this unusual and funny film (50min.)

Presented by the film producer, Herbert Ostwald

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Discussion Forum

make your opinion known at www.naturekenya.org/forum

Do you have a comment or observation on anything you have read in Nature net? Then log on and put your thoughts on these pages.

You are welcome to post any useful or entertaining message on natural history, environmental conservation, and related issues. **Please read the rules; keep to the point!** The administrator has the right to delete messages not in keeping with the spirit of the forum.

For information on how to post a topic or to edit or delete a post please click on the FAQ button on the screen.

Register a friend or relative as a *member!* and buy books, honey and other items from Nature Kenya

MAY AT A GLIMPSE

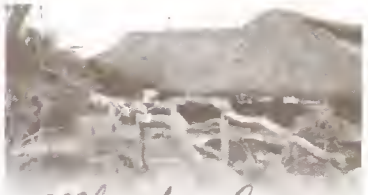
Thu 4	Fish sampling
Sat 13	Tree Walk
Fri 12	Trip to Sagana Fish Farm
Sat 13	Outing to Kigio
Sun 21	Sunday Birdwalk
Man 29	Tree Walk
Fri 26	Garden and Compost Course

Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning

Bird ringing on Thursday has ceased

Mbweha Camp

Congreve Conservancy, Lake Nakuru Special offer to Nature Kenya members



Mbweha Camp

Single room **Kshs 5,380/-** p.p. Double room **Kshs 7,080/-** p.p. ***Includes:*** Full Board Accommodation 1 night, 1 Bird walk or Hike, Conservancy Fees

Book with Mbweha Camp offices tel.,3877776 or 0722 782997 (Offer valid until 31st August 2006)

Editorial Team

Editor Catherine Ngarachu

Evening Skies Fleur Ng'weno

Naturalist's Corner Dino Martins

Globally Threatened Birds

action

BirdLife International is inviting you to take part in an online consultation process to discuss possible changes to the global IUCN Red List status of a number of African birds. We would be very grateful for information on each species' status, population, trends, range and threats.

The species currently under discussion, of interest in Kenya:

- East Coast Akalat *Sheppardia gunningi*: comments on population and trend information required?
- Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa*: uplist to Near Threatened??
- Beaudouin's Snake-eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*: newly split and threatened??
- Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*: uplist to Near Threatened??
- Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus*: uplist to Near Threatened??
- White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis*: uplist to Vulnerable??
- Rueppell's Griffon Vulture *Gyps rueppellii*: uplist to Near Threatened??
- Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*: uplist to Near Threatened or Vulnerable??
- White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*: uplist from Least Concern?

Please visit the forum at
www.birdlife.org/action/science/species/global_species_programme/gtb_forums.html
then click on 'Threatened African Birds'.

All contributions that are used will be explicitly acknowledged in the species accounts that will appear on the BirdLife and IUCN websites in due course, and in future publications.

For more write to Paul Kariuki Ndang'ang'a, BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat, Programme Manager & Africa Species Working Group Co-ordinator, tel.: 20 8562490 or 8562246 email <paul.ndanganga@birdlife.or.ke>

Report Illegal logging

Please report any illegal activity such as logging, charcoal burning, encroachment, cultivation, illegal grazing or burning of forest to the Kenya Forest Working Group, tel 020 3871335, or 0726 816000 or 0736 600700
- www.kenyaforests.org -

MORE news!

African Rock Art in Kisumu Museum

April 7th – June 30th 2006

Despite aspects of rock art that defy interpretation, it shows us that our ancestors had complex belief systems and sophisticated civilizations of which this is the only remaining trace. This exhibition will contribute to the conservation of this heritage through greater awareness of its importance and significance.

Open from 9:30 a.m.to 6:00 p.m. every day. For more info. contact the Trust for African Rock Art (TARA), tel.: 20-884467 email <tara@africanrockart.org> or the Kisumu Museum tel.: 57 2020332 or email <kisumuse@swiftkisumu.com>

natural history

Plants!

& the Plant Committee

John M Kimeu

Many implements of our lives are made from, or derived from plants. At birth we are cleaned with cotton wool and put in wooden cot; later we play in grass under the shade of trees, and at school and at work, we sit on wooden furniture and write on paper. Plants dominate human diets in most parts of the world, especially wheat, rice, maize, sorghum and potatoes. We are likely to live in houses built at least partially of wood and sit on and sleep on wooden furniture, frequently upholstered with plant fibres. As we grow older and need foods that uplift our mood, we resort to plants like tobacco, coffee, tea, cocoa, miraa, which are all of plant origin. Alcoholic beverages are fermented and/or distilled from plants: beer from barley, wheat, sorghum and maize; wine from grapes, rum from sugarcane, vodka from potatoes. Plants give as pleasure in ornamental plantings as in gardens and parks. When our tour of duty on earth is done, many of us will be dispatched in a wooden coffin - verily our lives are inseparable from plants, from the cradle to the grave.

It is therefore surprising that the average person can name very few plants, in any language. The Plant Committee endeavours to increase appreciation of plants among the public by simple, fun and inexpensive activities and materials. The ultimate aim is to enable ordinary citizens to relate to plants for their aesthetic, ecological and cultural value.

To participate in our walks, or for further information, write to: John M. Kimeu mobile 0720 767170 or email <jkmbaluka@yahoo.com>

AVIAN FLU

H5N1 avian influenza is a disease of chickens and other domestic poultry, with a high mortality rate. It also affects wild birds and even people.

To report unusual deaths of wild or domestic birds, National Task Force hotlines as advertised are
0722 726682 or 0726 600499 or
0722 331548 or 020 631639 or
020 2728292

There are several ways in which H5N1 can be spread within and between countries. Three major potential routes are the movements of infected poultry (and poultry products), movements of caged wild birds in trade, and movements of wild birds. Effective responses need to focus on all of these possible means of spread by:

- Heightened surveillance of migratory and resident wild birds, with collection of as much ecological information as possible in the case of confirmed outbreaks
- Improved biosecurity at all levels within the poultry industry
- Tight controls, backed up by better enforcement, on the movements of all poultry products, including fertiliser and feed made from poultry waste
- A continued moratorium on trade in wild birds originating from affected regions
- Full collaboration and sharing of information among those with relevant veterinary, medical, agricultural and environmental expertise.
- Deaths of migrant wild birds occur for many reasons other than H5N1. Such deaths need immediate investigation but should not be cause for panic.

Path of Moon 2 -6 May

EVENING SKY

Ian Mackay & Fleur Ng'weno

Moon, May 2006

May 5 first quarter; May 13 full moon;
May 20 last quarter; May 27 new moon

May Stars

Some stars are used as reference points in the sky. A few of the brighter ones conveniently placed along the ecliptic (the path of the moon and planets over the equator) are especially helpful for navigation. These include Regulus in the constellation Leo, Pollux in the constellation Gemini, and Antares, the fiery reddish star in the centre of Scorpius.

Regulus is just south of the moon on May 6th. Pollux and its twin, and the reddish planet Mars, are together in the western sky. And when Scorpius begins to rise in the east this month, Antares is to be found just 0.1 degrees north of the moon on May 14th.

Other prominent bright stars on May evenings include golden-orange Arcturus high in the north, and the two brilliant stars of the Centaur constellation in the south. West of the Centaur is the Southern Cross.

Planets, May 2006

Bright Jupiter is in the night sky from dusk to dawn and can be seen just north of the moon on May 12th. Saturn is high overhead in the early evening and is good for viewing until July. Saturn passes through the cluster of stars called the Beehive or M44 star cluster on May 28th.

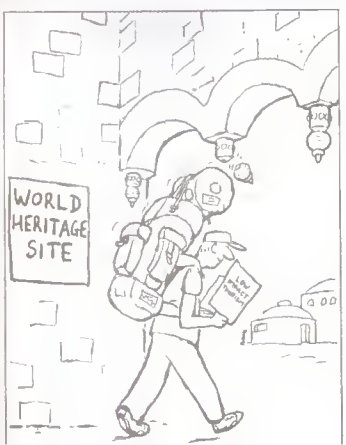
Mars is prominent in the evenings in the west. It begins the month just south of the moon on May 2nd, and ends the month just south of the moon on the 31st. On May 18th Mars is at its furthest north, and on the 23rd it is 5 degrees south of the star Pollux. Over the next few months Mars will dip lower over the sunset.

In the morning sky, brilliant Venus is high over the sunrise, remaining constant most of the month. In the next few months Venus will appear lower in the sky day by day.

Bird Hotline

3746090

African Swallow-tailed Kite Wanyaike Wamiti, Francis Lamaja, Godfrey Thuranira **Bare-eyed Thrush** Wanyoike Wamiti, Dr. Nick Geagiardis, Jake Cahen and Godfrey Thuranira *Mpala Research Centre, Laikipia/ April '06*



For more Chris Madden cartoons buy his book "The Beast that ate the Earth" from his website www.chrismadden.org

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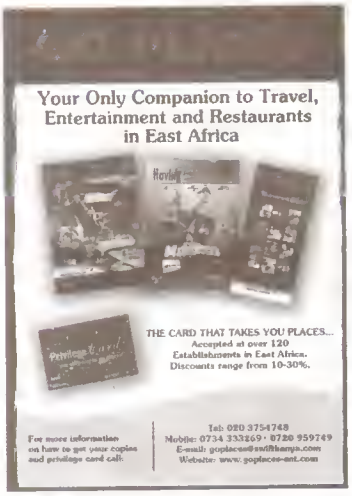
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Do you have historical stills or films about the first years of Nairobi National Park? Herbert Ostwald, a Kenya-based German film maker is looking for material for a documentary about Nairobi National Park. Call 0734 43 10 66 or email <wild.doc@t-online.de>

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We can be contacted at:
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Mobile: 0721 549720
<kenyahorti@wananchi.com>

Up & about

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. *Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.*

TREE WALKS

Guided tree walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday and last Monday, i.e. **13** and **29 May '06** from 9:30 a.m. Meet at the Arboretum gate. *Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.*

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, **i.e. 21 May '06**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

BIRD RINGING

Ringing at the Museums' Nairobi Botanic Garden, has **ceased** while construction is ongoing.

SAMAKI DAYS *New!!

Guided fish excursions on the first Thursday, i.e. **4 May '06** from 9:00 a.m - 12:30 p.m. Meet at the Nairobi Museum car park. *Pay Ksh 50/- per person on arrival*

KINANGOP GUEST HOUSE

Perched on the Kinangop Plateau with incredible views across the Rift Valley, the farm combines tussock-grass pasture, indigenous forest, and attractive gardens. The guesthouse is comfortable and fully furnished. Visitors can enjoy hikes and walks on the farm or go further afield with local guides.

For more information, brochure and non-member rates please contact Nature Kenya. Guest House rates: Day visit 350/-

MEMBER nos	Overnight	Weekend
1 to 2 pax	4000/-	6500/-
3 pax	4,900/-	7,400/-
4 pax	5,800/-	8,300/-

20% OFF ACCOMMODATION AT THE DRIFTWOOD

On presentation of your membership card, you can get this discount off accommodation (if paying by cash or cheque) at the Driftwood Beachclub. This is a charming beachfront property with great food and service. Contact: <gm@driftwoodclub.com> or tel 042 20155

Ngong Road Forest Walks

Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust nature walks held the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. **6 & 20 May '06, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse. Call Anthony Chalo to confirm on 575207 or 0733 712406.

Lake Victoria Sunset Birders (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders organise bird walks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 057 42952 or 0734 994938 or email lakevictoriasunsetbirders@yahoo.co.uk

Mt — Kenya — Biodiversity Conservation Group (MKBCG)

The MKBCG organise bird walks to sites around Naro Moru every last Saturday of the month i.e. **27 May '06.**

For more information contact 0722 364904, 0733 937115 or 062 62071 Email: mt_kebio@yahoo.co.uk_

Birding at Kinangop

Friends of Kinangop Plateau organise birdwalks every third Friday of the month i.e. **19 May '06** at 9:00 a.m around Maguiau and Njambini areas. To participate contact Bakari Ng'ang'a on 0721 470215

MARURA NAROK BIRDWATCHERS

A community group near Uaso Narok Swamp, Rumuruti, which organises birdwalks every last Saturday *i.e.* **27 May '06**. Call 062 32718 or email olmaisor@africaonline.co.ke

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **6 May '06, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fart Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, i.e. **20 May '06**.Please call Marlene Reid on (041) 491 648 to confirm

NatureKenya

Yes! Start Renew

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Would you like us to share your contacts Yes/ NO

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Mode Due Date Recpt Date

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Scopus (Ornithological Journal)	500	
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Total		

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